

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LIBYAN INTERNAL CLIMATE AT REGIME'S FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY

SUMMARY: AS LIBYAN REGIME'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY APPROACHES
AND PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF REVOLUTION ARE HAILED, COLONEL
QADHAFI IS CLEARLY DISSATISFIED WITH DOMESTIC SITUATION.
IN FACT, DESPITE SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS, THERE
IS FEELING OF DRIFT AND APATHY IN LIBYA. AGAINST THIS
BACKGROUND, AND IN LIGHT OF QADHAFI'S FOREIGN POLICY SETBACKS,
IT MIGHT SEEM TO SOME TIME IS RIPE FOR MOVE AGAINST HIM BY
DISGRUNTLED ARMY OFFICERS. THIS SEEMS UNLIKELY. NO ONE IS
IN THE WINGS WHO COULD TAKE OVER; OF FIVE RCC MEMBERS WHO
ARE STILL POLITICALLY ACTIVE, NONE SEEMS LIKELY SUCCESSOR.
ANOTHER LINE OF SPECULATION IS THAT QADHAFI MIGHT ANNOUNCE
DISSOLUTION OF RCC, AND HOLDING OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
ON SEPT 1. QADHAFI'S BASIC PROBLEM IS CONFLICT BETWEEN
CONSERVATIVE LIBYAN SOCIETY AND HIS RADICALISM.

1. AS QADHAFI'S REGIME PREPARES TO CELEBRATE ITS FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY IN POWER, A LOOK AT THE INTERNAL SITUATION IS
IN ORDER.

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2. AS QADHAFI SEES IT, HIS REGIME'S DOMESTIC ACHIEVEMENTS

HAVE BEEN MIXED. SUBSTANTIAL ECONOMIC PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT HE COMPLAINS THAT LIBYANS HAVE NOT RISEN TO HIS REVOLUTIONARY CHALLENGE (TRIPOLI 923). OUR ASSESSMENT IS NOT DISSIMILAR. OIL REVENUES ARE BEING SPENT AT INCREASINGLY FAST RATE ON BUILDING BADLY NEEDED SCHOOLS, HOUSING, HOSPITALS, AND FACTORIES, AND RESULTS ARE READILY APPARENT. BUT THERE IS LACK OF SENSE OF PURPOSE IN ECONOMIC EFFORTS, AND PERCEPTIBLE FEELING OF DRIFT AND APATHY. LAST SUMMER'S MARCH ON CAIRO FOR UNITY WAS LAST EVIDENCE OF ENTHUSIASM FOR ANYTHING BY A LIBYAN CROWD. WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF QADHAFI'S SILENT APPEARANCE BEFORE TRIBAL GATHERING AT SIRTE IN JULY (TRIPOLI 738), EVERY MASS MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION REGIME HAS STAGED SINCE THEN HAS FALLEN FLAT. JALLUD'S SPEECH TO RALLY ON ANNIVERSARY OF U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM WHEELUS AIRBASE JUNE 11 IS CASE IN POINT. THIS BOTHERS QADHAFI AND HIS FELLOWS, WHO TEND TO TAKE THEIR OWN RHETORIC ABOUT "REVOLUTION BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE" SERIOUSLY, AND WE CONTINUE TO SEE IT AS MAJOR FACTOR IN QADHAFI'S WITHDRAWAL FROM PUBLIC EYE LAST APRIL.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND OF POPULAR DISENCHANTMENT, AND IN LIGHT OF QADHAFI'S FOREIGN POLICY SETBACKS, IT MIGHT SEEM TIME IS REPE FOR A MOVE AGAINST QADHAFI, PERHAPS BY DISGRUNTLED FREE OFFICERS. MOVE COULD BE BILLED AS "CORRECTION OF THE REVOLUTION'S COURSE", TO AVOID ANY IMPLICATIONS OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION, AND MIGHT TOUCH OFF A TURNING INWARD, AWAY FROM FOREIGN ADVENTURES. OUR OWN FEELING IS STILL THAT QADHAFI'S PRESTIGE, AND HIS CONTROL OVER ARMY, MAKE THIS UNLIKELY. THERE IS NO ONE WAITING IN WINGS OF SUFFICIENT STATURE TO TAKE OVER FROM HIM, INCLUDING JALLUD. RCC IS INCREASINGLY A FICTION WHICH SERVES ONLY PURPOSE OF MASKING QADHAFI'S POWER. ONLY FIVE RCC MEMBERS, ABOUT HALF THE BODY, CONTINUE TO BE PUBLICLY ACTIVE: JALLUD; LT COL ABU BAKR YUNIS, ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF; MAJOR HUMAYDI, MINISTER OF INTERIOR; MAJOR HAWWADI, SEC GEN OF ASU; AND MAJOR MUHAYSHI, WHO SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN CHARGE OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL MATTERS. NONE OF THESE MEN APPEARS TO US TO BE PLAUSIBLE SUCCESSOR. THERE IS ALSO, OF COURSE, CHANCE OF MORE OR LESS WELL-DISGUISED EGYPTIAN INTERVENTION. WE CANNOT EVALUATE EGYPTIAN

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INTENTIONS, BUT ONE RESTRAINING FACTOR, BESIDES DIFFICULTY OF FINDING PLAUSIBLE PRO-EGYPTIAN LIBYAN WHO COULD TAKE OVER, MIGHT BE FEAR OF BACKLASH, INSIDE LIBYA AND IN ARAB WORLD, TO WHAT WOULD PROBABLY BE SEEN AS EGYPTIAN BULLYING.

4. ANOTHER POSSIBILITY WAS RAISED BY FUAD MATAR IN "AN NAHAR" AUG 18. CITING RELIABLE SOURCES, HE PREDICTS THAT

ON SEPT 1 QADHAFI WILL ANNOUNCE DISSOLUTION OF RCC,
"CREATION OF POST OF PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND
HOLDING OF ELECTIONS". WHILE WE DOUBT THAT QADHAFI WOULD
FORMALLY DISSOLVE RCC IN PUBLIC, HE MIGHT WELL DECIDE
TIME HAS COME FOR SOME SUCH REORGANIZATION OF
GOVERNMENT. ARMY NEWSPAPER "AL FATIH", WHICH REFLECTS
HIS THINKING, HAS SEVERAL TIMES IN RECENT WEEKS BEEN CRITICAL
OF "GOVERNMENT APPARATUS" FOR NOT IMPLEMENTING HIS
ORDERS (TRIPOLI A-29); CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY WOULD MAKE
CONVENIENT SACRIFICIAL OFFERING TO POPULAR GRUMBLING. IT IS
ALSO TRUE THAT QADHAFI HAS BEEN EDGING OUT OF HIS "IDEOLOGUE"
ROLE (TRIPOLI 937), AND HAS GRADUALLY BECOME MORE VISIBLE. IN
THIS CONNECTION IT MAY BE SIGNIFICANT THAT INVITATIONS TO
SEPT 1 MILITARY PARADE, WHICH WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED,
WENT OUT IN NAME OF "COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF
ARMED FORCES", E.E. QADHAFI, WITHOUT MENTIONING RCC.

5. WHATEVER HAPPENS SEPT 1 (PROBABLY NOTHING BUT MILITARY
PARADE, AS ANNOUNCED), QADHAFI'S INTERNAL PROBLEMS WILL
REMAIN. HE HAS SWEEPED AWAY OLD NETWORK OF INFLUENTIAL
FAMILIES AND CONNECTIONS WHICH RAN COUNTRY UNDER THE
MONARCHY, BUT HE HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PUT ANYTHING SOLID
IN ITS PLACE. HIS REGIME RESTS ON MILITARY, AND
MASS ORGANIZATIONS HE HAS TRIED TO CREATE, LIKE ASU,
EXIST MOSTLY ON PAPER. HE CAN SHAKE COUNTRY UP, AS WITH
LAST YEAR'S "POPULAR REVOLUTION", AND THIS YEAR'S DECREE
OF COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING FOR ALL LIBYANS, BUT WHEN
EACH TIME PROMISED MIRACLES OF REVOLUTIONARY TRANS-
FORMATION FAIL TO OCCUR, AND ESSENTIAL CONSERVATISM
OF LIBYAN SOCIETY REASSERTS ITSELF, HIS CREDIBILITY SUFFERS
A LITTLE MORE. THIS IS HIS DILEMMA AFTER FIVE YEARS IN
POWER.

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